



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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COUNTY PLANS FINAL ATTACK ON MOSQUITOES *Wetlands Targeted for County's Last 2004 Aerial Application of Larvicide*

Today the County Vector Program will implement its last strategic attack on mosquitoes of the year. Using a helicopter to apply mosquito larvicide, Vector Control staff will treat 27 hard-to-reach, heavily vegetated habitats that are known to breed many species of mosquitoes.

"We have had great success with our aerial treatments over the last five months. Mosquito populations have declined 80% to 90%. With cooler weather rapidly approaching, the aerial treatments will no longer be necessary. We will resume our monthly treatment schedule in the spring when the weather begins to warm up and mosquitoes are active again," said Gary Erbeck, Director, County of San Diego Department of Environmental Health.

The larvicides, ground corncob granules containing *Bacillus sphaericus* and *Bacillus thuringiensis israelensis* (Bti), are naturally occurring bacteria registered by the Environmental Protection Agency. Designed to dissolve in water, the larvicide kills developing mosquito larvae for up to 4 weeks. These larvicides are not toxic to humans, wildlife, non-target species, or the environment.

Last year, 46 states reported nearly 10,000 human cases of West Nile virus illness, and 264 human deaths. So far this year 1,821 human cases and 59 human deaths have been reported nationally. In California 685 human cases and 18 human deaths have been reported. Only two of California's 58 counties have not reported any West Nile virus activity.

Protect yourself from mosquito bites by eliminating mosquito-breeding sites around your home, avoid going outside at dawn and dusk, use DEET when you are outdoors and keep door and window screens in good repair. To report dead birds and mosquito breeding call (888) 551-INFO. For more tips on protecting your home, family, and community please visit the County's West Nile virus website at www.SDFightTheBite.com or call toll-free 888-551-INFO.

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